



# BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION  
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
QUAD \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIES \_\_\_\_\_  
NEG. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR NAME: Cynthia Howk DATE: Dec., 1994  
133 S. Fitzhugh St.  
YOUR ADDRESS: Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: 546-7029  
ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

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## IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Rigney-Feeney House  
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Greece VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
3. STREET LOCATION: 1885 Latta Road  
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒  
5. PRESENT OWNER Mr. & Mrs. Robert Feeney ADDRESS: (same) Rochester, NY 14612  
6. USE: Original: farm/residence Present: residence  
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐  
Interior accessible: Explain private residence

## DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☐ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐  
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☐ other: vinyl siding (over  
Roof = asphalt shingles. Foundation = fieldstone. wood clapboard)  
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☒  
(if known) b. wood frame with light members ☐  
c. masonry load bearing walls ☐  
d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
e. other \_\_\_\_\_  
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☒ b. good ☐ c. fair ☐ d. deteriorated ☐  
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"Here's another one of those big Federal houses. It's certainly a 'red' -  
but let's make it a 'red minus' because of the synthetic siding. " P.Malo.

COLOR CODE

Red minus





14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☒ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☐  
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐  
f. other: \_\_\_\_\_
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:  
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☒  
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☒ f. greenhouse ☐  
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☒  
i. landscape features: deciduous & coniferous trees/shrubs  
j. other: modern in-ground swimming pool (c. 1960s); well.
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):  
a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐  
c. scattered buildings ☐  
d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☐  
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒  
h. other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

(see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

**SIGNIFICANCE**

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: c. 1850 - 1852 (per owner)  
ARCHITECT: not determined  
BUILDER: probably Patrick Rigney

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation sheet)

21. SOURCES: (see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: agricultural: former farm residence

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11c.

Contemporary c. 1980s vinyl siding has been installed over the original wood clapboard siding.

The late 19th-century, Italianate style, front porch with chamfered posts and curved brackets was removed (c. 1960s; it is visible in 1953 slide).

The porch on the east side of the house has been enclosed (c. 1950s-60s).

The large brick chimney on the west elevation of the house is a contemporary addition (original corbelled chimney there is visible in a 1953 photo).

A corbelled brick chimney on the ridgeline of the south wing has been removed (visible in a 1953 photo).

On the first story, the lower window sash have been converted to a single pane of glass (early 1900s?); originally would have been 12 panes of glass (upper 12-pane sash remain).

The open, one-story, gable-roofed summer kitchen attached to the rear of the house (south elevation) was removed in the mid-1950s and a contemporary wing (with family room) was constructed.

A large picture window was added to the west elevation to allow more light into the kitchen. Designed with a multi-paned transom over a large single pane of glass, this window was originally located in the Canton, NY house of Mrs. Feeney's mother. It was removed, brought here, and installed on this wall, when her mother came to live with them in the 1950s.

The interior was modernized by owners Rodney and Martha Wilbur beginning in 1949 when they bought the property; a number of the first floor walls were moved. Beginning in 1952, the current owners have removed these contemporary changes and attempted to return the first floor layout to its previous configuration.

A contemporary concrete floor has been installed in the cellar over the original dirt floor (c. 1950s-60s).

In the cellar, two rooms with lath and plaster walls have been removed (c. 1950s-60s).

17. This Federal-style house is located on a multi-acre lot on the south side of Latta Road (State Route 18) in the northeast quadrant of the town. The house faces north. A driveway is located east of the house and leads to a non-contributing in-ground swimming pool (c. 1960s), a non-contributing frame garage (1958) and two non-contributing frame storage sheds (c. 1970s-80s). To the east at 1775 Latta Road is a turn-of-the-century house, which once served as the tenant house for this property. Also to the east is the summit of Paddy Hill, with its elementary school and former Mother of Sorrows Church. The neighborhood is mostly post-World War II residential architecture. Picturesque Acres and North Point Tract, to the west and south, were developed in the mid-1950s on land that was originally part of the Rigney Farm.

18. The Rigney-Feeney House is a late example of the Federal style of residential architecture. The house is said to have been constructed in 1850 by Patrick Rigney. It is of post-and-beam-construction on a two-foot-thick, fieldstone foundation. The exterior walls are clad in contemporary vinyl siding (the original, narrow, wood clapboards are intact underneath).

The form of the house consists of a rectangular, side-gabled, two-and-one-half-story main block; a gable-roofed, two-story south wing; and a contemporary (c. 1960s), shed-roofed, one-story addition at the rear.

The main block is five-bays wide and two-bays deep. Fenestration is symmetrical with 12/1, double-hung wood sash on the first story and 12/8, double-hung wood sash on the second story. The windows retain their original, louvered, wood shutters (all of the original hardware is in storage). Two half-fan windows with multiple panes are located in the east and west gables. An original corbelled brick chimney sits atop the east gable; a 20th-century replacement chimney is located on the west elevation and pierces the top of the west gable. Previously, the chimneys in the east and west gables were "hanging" chimneys; their brick shafts only extended down into the attic, where they connected with the stovepipes that extended up from the first floor parlors.

The center entrance on the facade (north elevation) features a Federal-style surround and entablature with decorative frieze. Four fluted pilasters and two narrow, rectangular side lights (windows) flank the door. Solid wood panels are beneath the sidelights. The original, six-panel front door

18. continued

retains its original, heavy lock and metal doorknob. The present front steps and wrought iron railings are contemporary additions (c. 1960s).

A 1953 photo shows the late 19th-century front porch that formerly extended across three bays of the facade. The porch was a one-story, shed-roofed open porch with handsome Italianate style details: four square, chamfered posts; decorative cornice brackets, and segmental-arched brackets between the posts. Because of its Italianate design, it appears that the porch was constructed c. 1870s-90s. Due to deterioration (caused by leaking Yankee gutters in the porch roof), the porch was removed by the Feeneys.

The two-story south wing is two-bays wide and three-bays deep. Fenestration is regular with 8/8 and 1/1 double-hung, wood sash. A large, early 20th-century picture window with multi-paned transom has been installed on the west elevation (first story) of the south wing. This picture window was originally located in the Canton, NY home of Mrs. Feeney's mother.

A one-story, shed-roofed porch extends along the south elevation of the main block and the east elevation of the south wing. Featuring decorative turned wood posts, it appears to date from the 1880s-1890s period. The south part of this porch has been enclosed (c. 1950s-60s).

At the rear of the house, attached to the south elevation of the south wing, is a contemporary (1950s-early '60s), one-story, shed-roofed family room wing with brick chimney. It is constructed on the site of the original open summer kitchen (visible in 1953 photo). The summer kitchen was a one-story, gabled structure with east and west walls; its south elevation, however, was completely open (no wall; only two horizontal structural beams are visible in the photo). The summer kitchen was a pegged-wood structure that had fallen into disrepair (chimney had collapsed, walls not sound). The Feeneys pulled the summer kitchen off with the help of a neighbor's tractor to prepare the site for the new addition.

The interior of the house has had several remodelings since the property passed out of the ownership of the Rigney family and the Catholic Diocese in the 1940s. Rodney and Martha Wilbur purchased the house in 1949 and began to modernize the

18. continued

interior for entertaining (the house was without insulation). In 1952, the Feeneys bought the house. They removed the changes installed by the Wilburs and attempted to return the interior to its earlier configuration. They consulted with Father O'Rourke at Mother of Sorrows Church; he was very familiar with the house and described to them how the interior was formerly laid out.

Located under the main two-and-one-half-story section, the cellar of the house features large 22.5'-long wood beams. They beams consist of alternating 10"-thick, square and half-round oak timbers (with adze marks) laid north-to-south. When the Feeneys acquired the property, there were two rooms finished with plaster-and-lath at the east end of the basement (they have been removed). Their original purpose has not been determined, but the Feeneys speculate if they were used for cold storage or cheese making. The heating system is a hot water system (with oil burner) that utilizes the early 20th-century radiators in the house. Drainage in the basement is gravity fed. An exterior stairs with original flagstone steps leads from the basement up to the driveway at the southeast corner of the house.

The first floor of the house features a center-entrance hall with the staircase to the second floor (opposite the front door). The east parlor has its covered stovepipe hole still visible in the ceiling. The west parlor has a contemporary (c. 1950s-60s) brick fireplace and wood mantel on the site of the original chimney/fireplace. The top window sash in the west parlor retain many of their historic, wavy glass panes.

The original dining room was turned into a kitchen in the 1940s; the Feeneys have converted it back to its dining room use. At the northwest corner of the dining room is a staircase that leads to the second floor (stairs added after the original construction of the house; early 1900s?). In the southwest corner of the dining room is a 19th-century, wood corner cupboard that was originally located in the kitchen (Feeneys moved it to this location).

Located in the historic dining room in the 1940s, the kitchen has now been moved back to its original location at the rear of the house and has been expanded to the east. The northeast corner of the kitchen is the original section; here an open porch and cold pantry were formerly located (no longer extant). During the kitchen remodeling (c. 1960s),

18. continued

the large wood cupboard from the east wall was relocated to the north wall. Prior to the remodeling, the west kitchen wall had no window and the room was very dark. To allow more light into the kitchen, the large picture window with multi-paned transom (from the Canton, NY home of Mrs. Feeney's mother) was installed in the west wall. At the southwest corner of the kitchen is the steep, enclosed, narrow, 19th-century staircase that originally led to the "hired man's" room (now master bedroom) upstairs, in the south wing.

The flooring in the house consists of early-20th century narrow, hardwood flooring on the first floor and the wide, soft pine floor boards on the second floor. To protect the historic pine flooring from wear and tear, the Feeneys covered much of it with linoleum when their seven children were growing up.

There are five bedrooms in the house: three bedrooms are in the main, 2-1/2-story section and two bedrooms are in the rear (south) wing. The bedrooms in the south wing have shorter ceilings. Cornerposts are visible in many of the bedrooms.

Today, the site is landscaped with mature deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs. A 1960s, in-ground swimming pool is located directly behind the house. A 1958, gabled, four-car garage is located at the south end of the driveway, while two, small, contemporary (c. 1970s-80s) gambrel-roofed storage sheds are located to the east of the driveway. A tall, metal flagpole sits to the northeast of the house. The wood rail fence was surrounding the property was installed as an anniversary present by the Feeneys.

Since this property was originally developed as a farm, there were also outbuildings on the site. None of these buildings are extant today. However, slides from 1953 show the original, large, gambrel-roofed barn, corn crib, gabled garage, brick smokehouse, well pump with slate paving stones, dry-laid stone wall and iron fence. They are described as follows:

Located at the southeast corner of the house, between the side door and the driveway, the original well has been filled in. It had a stone-lined shaft (similar to the one at the Newcomb Homestead, 400 Newcomb Road). The cast iron well pump there has also been removed. The large slate paving

18. continued

stones that originally surrounded the well pump have been re-installed as a sidewalk next to the southeast corner porch. There was a second well on the site, farther south near the barn.

Constructed with a double wall of bricks, the original smokehouse was immediately southeast of the summer kitchen (north end of swimming pool is now here). The roof was blown off during a storm & subsequently the smokehouse was dismantled. The Feeneys still have many of the bricks from this smokehouse.

The original outhouse (no longer extant) was located just west of the family room's west wall.

A corncrib, located southeast of the swimming pool, is no longer extant.

The large gambrel-roofed barn at the south (back) end of the property burned down in 1958; the present four-car garage was then built in 1958, just northwest of the barn site.

A dry-laid, stone wall originally extended across the front yard, near the road. The wall began approximately opposite the front door and continued west to Island Cottage Road. The section in front of 1885 Latta Rd. (visible in 1953 photo) was removed by the 1960s, when the public sidewalk was installed. The remaining section of wall in front of 1911 Latta Road has been re-constructed with mortar.

A 1953 photo shows an early 20th-century (?) decorative iron fence in front of the house, near the road. It extended from the east end of the stone wall and across the driveway. The fence had straight balusters, a gate and two concrete posts (flanking the driveway). It was removed in the later 1950s-60s.

20. The Rigney-Feeney House is architecturally significant as a noteworthy example of the Federal style in the town. The house is historically significant for its associations with one of Greece's pioneer families, the Rigney family, and the early 19th-century Irish immigrants who settled in the Paddy Hill area. The house, with its large, multi-acre site, is a visual reminder of Greece's agricultural heritage.



20. continued

The two-and-one-half-story, rectangular plan house with south wing is representative of the vernacular, Federal-style farmhouse built in Greece in the early and mid 19th-century. Although the house is vernacular in form, its elegant front door surround is notable (this entrance and the front doorway at 1173 English Road are the most sophisticated, Federal-style doorways in the town).

It is reported that the house was constructed in 1850 by Patrick Rigney. The house is shown on the 1852 county map with "Pat'k. Rigney" as owner. Because of its distinctive Federal style massing, plan, and details (especially the front door), the house may have been built at an earlier date. The Newcomb House at 400 Newcomb Road is of similar design and it was constructed c. 1835. The Federal style was popular in this region from the 1780s to the 1830s. Often it would continue longer in fashion in rural areas, where styles did not change as rapidly.

The removal of the contemporary vinyl siding, the renovation/re-painting of the original wood clapboard siding, and the reconstruction of the Italianate front porch would enhance the architectural significance of this house.

The 1872 county map shows this site with one building and owned by "P. Rigney." To the east on the southwest corner of Latta and Mt. Read Blvd. is a building marked, "No. 5 School." Our Mother of Sorrows Church is across the street on the northeast corner.

The 1902 county map shows this as a 107.45-acre parcel owned by "Catherine A. and Mary L. Rigney." There is, however, no building shown here (this appears to be a printing error). The Rigney property extends east to Mt. Read Blvd. and west to Island Cottage Road. Only the small schoolhouse lot on the southwest corner of Latta and Mt. Read is excluded from their property. Catherine and Mary Rigney appear to be the unmarried daughters of Patrick Rigney, the original owner of this property.

The 1924 county maps shows this as a 104-acre parcel with "C.A. and M.L. Rigney" as owners. This would be the same two owners shown on the previous 1902 map. Two frame houses are shown (#1875 Latta Rd. and the tenant house at #1775 Latta Rd.) and two frame outbuildings to the south of #1885 Latta.

20. continued

The 1930 suburban directory shows Patrick J. Rigney and Mary Rigney at this address. Arthur Newcomb of 400 Newcomb Rd. described Patrick Rigney as "a bachelor who lived there with his sisters." For many years this was a working farm. However, according to Mr. and Mrs. Feeney, the Rigney family eventually ceased to do their own farming. Instead, they rented out the land to other farmers, who grew crops on the acreage. Mr. Feeney reported that the Rigney family did not have to farm as an occupation, as they had invested in Kodak stock early in that company's history and became relatively well-off through that investment. This sound financial advice came to the Rigneys through their friends, the Clarks (whose farm on Dewey Ave. is now the site of St. Joseph's Villa).

Patrick J. Rigney, known as "Packet," was apparently a local character, who probably "never worked a day in his life!" and was known for his frequent visits to the nearby taverns at Dewey Ave. and Charlotte. According to reports, he would go to Charlotte for an evening at one of the saloons; later the tavern keeper would put him back in his buggy and send him off, knowing that the horse could find its way back to the farm without any direction from Packet. Unfortunately, this unhealthy lifestyle eventually caught up with him. While inebriated, Packet fell down the back stairs (from the hired man's room, where he slept). His sisters called the priest at Our Mother of Sorrows to come out to the house. It was to no avail, however, as Packet died in the fall.

Patrick J. Rigney was survived by his two unmarried sisters. It was apparently Mary Rigney, upon her death, who left this property to the Catholic Diocese of Rochester in the late 1930s. Mr. Feeney reported that the Rigneys had originally planned to leave the property to Our Mother of Sorrows Church. A subsequent disagreement with the priest there had them change their minds (and will!). They hoped that the diocese would use this property as a cemetery. Neighbors, however, did not want a cemetery here on Paddy Hill.

The diocese rented out the house for a short time, then sold the property about 1944 to Harmon Poray at the low price of \$40,000. Poray began to sell off the property for tract housing. In 1949, Rodney and Martha Wilbur purchased the site and began to modernize the house. He was employed by Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company.

20. continued

In 1952, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Feeney purchased the house and site. At the time there were corn and wheat fields south of the house and barn. Mr. Feeney stated that the bank required them to pay one-third of the cost of in cash, as it was an "old house" (it took all of his war bonds and Navy finance to do it). Mr. Feeney is a long time resident of the town. Born in Skaneateles, he moved to Greece in 1927, when his father came here to work for Kodak. His father was a paper maker and he came to work at Kodak's paper making facility that opened just after World War I. Mr. Feeney lived near Dewey Ave. and Stone Road. It was still a mostly rural community, with only two police on the town force. He reports that Dewey Ave. was then just a two-lane, dirt road ("If you saw three cars on the road, that was unusual!"). He would bicycle north to the Shoremont (Rigney Bluff) area to go swimming.

Mr. Feeney has particular memories of Our Mother of Sorrows Church and its site. He recalls the horse sheds, located across from the church on the west side of Mt. Read Blvd. Each family would own their stall and the land on which it stood. Although designed for horse-drawn buggies, the sheds were still extant in the 1930s, when they were used for cars. The sheds were finally taken down about 1952, for the construction of the new school. Construction of the school was somewhat delayed, however, until they cleared the title to each of the shed owner's lots (a lengthy process). Mr. Feeney also attended the 100th anniversary of Our Mother of Sorrows in the 1930s and recalls seeing Governor Franklin Roosevelt, who was wheeled right past him and up the ramp to the podium.

In the 1950s, the Feeneys began remove the alterations installed by the previous owners (moved some walls back to their original locations, etc.). Father O'Rourke of Our Mother of Sorrows Church gave them much information about the layout of the first floor during the Rigney ownership.

In 1958 the large gambrel-roofed barn at the south (rear) of the property burned down. At 11 p.m. one night someone knocked at their door and asked, "Do you know that your barn is on fire?" They assume it was an accidental fire, possibly caused by workman and a spark falling into the cocoa bean shells that were stored in the barn. Mr. Feeney managed to save his new 1958 Plymouth auto (he backed it out before the fire got to it).

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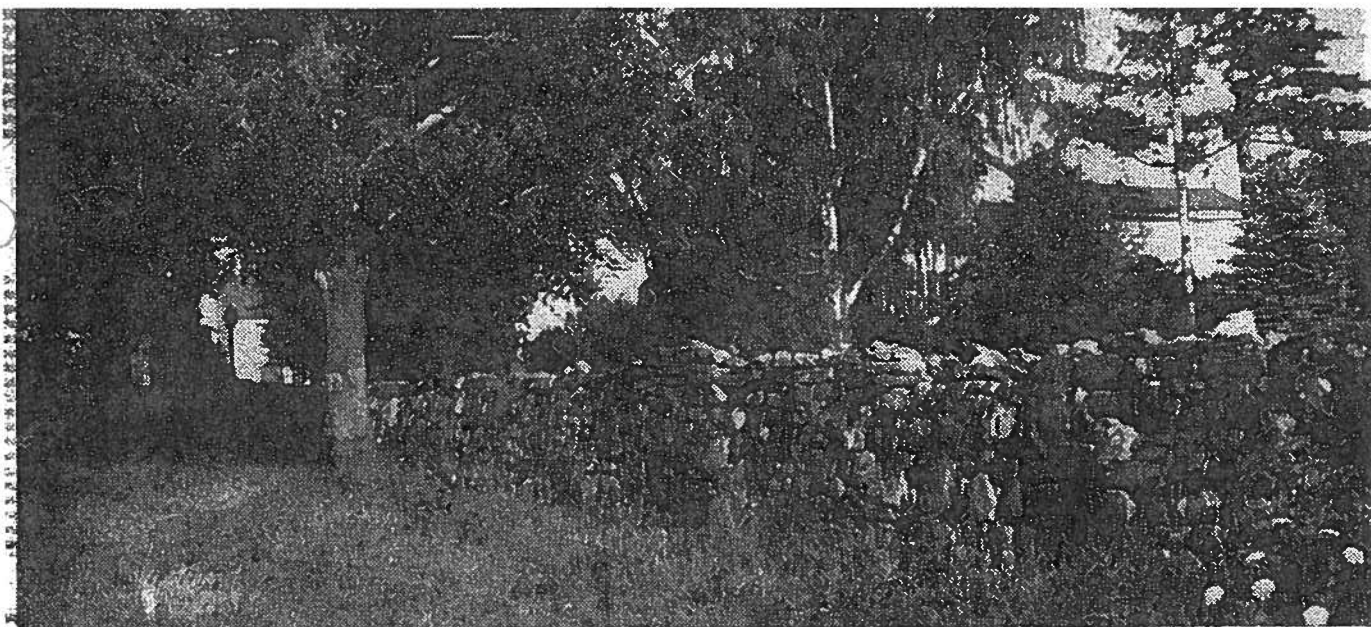
20. continued

The Feeneys raised their family of seven children here. Mrs. Feeney's mother also resided with them for twelve years (she brought the picture window from her Canton, NY house for the west kitchen wall). Like the Rigneys, the Feeneys are also members of Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

After 43 years, the Feeneys continue to carefully maintain this highly significant Greece property.

21. See final report for bibliography; interview with Arthur Newcomb, 12/1994; site visit and interview with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Feeney, 1/1995.





**STILL STANDS**—This big stone fence avoided the fate of most stone fences in Greece which were ground up to make crushed stone for paving roads. Most of the

wall shown here is in front of 1911 Latta Road, where Town Attorney and Mrs. Leo T. Sawyko live. The old Rigney house can be seen through the trees.

## A Dobson Reminiscence

# Most Old Stone Walls Now Under Pavement

Rochester Times-Union  
Tues., Aug. 13, 1963

58

By EDWARD CLOOS

The last big stone fence in Greece is a formidable example of its kind which has resisted "progress" for decades.

It's the Rigney farm fence along Latta Road, just west of Mt. Read Boulevard.

Peace Justice Frank Dobson, who became supervisor in 1910, can recall when town officials wanted to tear it down.

Shortly after he became supervisor, the Higby-Armstrong law which was designed to spur improvement of rural roads went into effect. The state paid 50 per cent, the county 35 per cent and the town paid just 15 per cent of the cost of road improvements.

"It was a wonderful deal for a relatively wealthy town like Greece," Dobson recalls. So he and the late Clifford E. Clarke, the highway superintendent, organized a road program.

Latta Road was just about the only paved road in town at the time. Mt. Read Boulevard, called Eddy Road in those days, was not paved.

roads then was to use the macadam process. Although macadam is a term that has been applied to all types of paving other than concrete, it actually means packed small stone on a firm earth base.

"The town bought a stone crusher, and we ground up just about every stone wall in town," Dobson said. "The town paid for the stone and most of the farmers were tickled to death to get rid of it—especially since they could get paid for drawing it in themselves in the winter time," he said.

"The only one we couldn't get was on the Rigney place—and that was a big plastered job," he said.

The stone was rolled and the roads were finished with limestone, brought in from the Mid-West, and water. They were 10 to 12 feet wide—"good enough for horses and rigs," Dobson said.

Most of the roads had been dirt, scraped from time to time by the horse-drawn graders each of the 15 highway districts then in town owned.

once stretched west from the big white house at 1885 Latta Road for hundreds of feet. The farm was sold 20 years ago and most of the western part of the wall fell into neglect.

A large part of it was removed during grading for a subdivision on the old farm. Some of it, possibly, found its way into the shoulders of Long Pond Road which were rebuilt after reconstruction of the road last year using fill dirt from the Latta Road property.

Another run-down section is on the property of the subdivision and may be removed.

The major part of the wall which remains sound is across the front of the property of Leo T. Sawyko, the town attorney, who lives at 1911 Latta. He firmly intends to preserve it.

The Rigney house itself, now owned by Robert J. Feeney, has only a small section of wall on its lot.

The house was built in 1850 and the wall was built later. It could be nearly 100 years old—the exact age isn't known.

